THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (d) The Government is in the process of preparing a road map for judicial reforms in the country. In this regard, the Government has begun to hold wide consultations. The judiciary would be associated in this exercise. A decision in the matter will be taken thereafter.

(e) In the Writ Petition (C) No.288 of 2009 before the Delhi High Court, it has been submitted by the Registrar General, Supreme Court of India that the Judges of the Supreme Court are not opposed to declaring their assets provided that such declarations are made in accordance with due procedure laid down by a law which would prescribe (a) the authority to which the declaration would be made; (b) the form in which the declaration would have to be made along with a clear definition of what constitutes 'assets'; and (c) proper safeguards, checks and balances to prevent misuse of the information which would be made available.

Corruption in judiciary

1702. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB:
SHRI SABIR ALI:
Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Punjab Vigilance Bureau has released some tapes depicting the touts talking about cases being fixed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court;

(b) whether the reports passed on to the Chief Justice of India disclosed malpractices in the judiciary and manipulation in the High Court Registry through touts, which hint at arrangement-cum-purchase of judicial orders appointments, etc.;

(c) if so, what are the facts in this regard; and

(d) what is Government's scheme to eradicate corruption in judiciary?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (c) As per information received from the Supreme Court of India, the reports forwarded by the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court were not authenticated.

(d) The Government is considering bringing a legislation for greater accountability of the Higher Judiciary. In respect of the subordinate judiciary, the responsibility rests with the respective High Courts and the State Governments.

Pending cases in Supreme Court

1703. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the pendency of cases in Supreme Court has been steadily increasing from 34,649 in 2006 to 50,163 as on March 31,2009;

(b) if so, the details of the cases pending, new cases filed, disposal off and pending, year-wise since 2006; and

(c) the steps being taken to reduce the backlog of pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) As per the information available, the pendency of cases in Supreme Court has increased from 39780 at the end of the year 2006 to 50,659 as on 1st June, 2009. The details of the opening balance, cases instituted, disposed of and pending year-wise since 2006 is given below:-

Sl. No.	Year	Opening balance	Institution	Disposal	Pendency at the end of year
1.	2006	34481	61839	56540	39780
2.	2007	39780	69103	61957	46926
3.	2008	46926	70357	67464	49819

(c) The following steps have been taken to reduce the backlog of pending cases:

(1) Judges' strength in Supreme Court has been increased from 26 to 31.

(2) Benches of Supreme Court were constituted for hearing urgent matters as well as old regular matters during summer vacation.

(3) Five and more matters on Identical issues are treated as a group matter instead of 10 and more matters earlier, which has helped in achieving significant increase in the number of disposals.

(4) Directions has been issued to streamline and to make effective the listing of cases before various courts.

(5) Cases involving identical/common question(s) of law are posted before the appropriate Bench.

(6) Three days of each week are earmarked for hearing regular matters.

(7) A large number of matters have been taken up for final disposal instead of the usual course of granting leave and hearing in due course.

(8) Constitution Bench and Larger Bench sit regularly to decide important Questions of law, particularly in a large number of matters involving common issues.

(9) All the fresh matters are listed within 10 to 14 days of registration and many disposed of at the preliminary hearing.

(10) Number of matters listed before each Bench on Miscellaneous Days has been increased.

(11) More Division Benches now deal with criminal cases.

Disclosure of assets by judges

†1704. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.